investigation on this subject. It is regarded as a desideratum by all, and as the consummation of botanical science by many, that plants should be so arranged, as that their assemblages should agree, not only in external forms, but in internal qualities and operative powers. Certain general agreements of this kind evidently prevail throughout nature; yet they are so varied, and subject to so many exceptions, that it is difficult to establish them by general scientific descriptions, and when they are rendered too minute they seem to lose much of their importance. It is perhaps as easy to know the properties of plants from their external habit, as to understand the characters of mankind from their physiognomy. Accurate observers know more than they can communicate the means of knowing to others, yet the most accurate are liable to be mistaken. Many vegetables of the closest affinity and resemblance, even species of the same genus, differ wholly from each other in their effects. Witness the species of Cucumis, Convolvulus, and Solanum, some of which are salutary, and others highly deleterious. Nevertheless there are many general truths, or at least general probabilities, by which every one would be influenced, and which have so much importance, that they will never be forgotten.

No botanist, even if in danger of starving in a wilderness, would indulge his hunger on a root or fruit taken from an unknown plant of the natural order *Luridæ*, of the *Multisiliquæ*, or the *umbelliferous aquatics*. On the contrary, he would not feel a moment's hesitation in regard to any of the *Gramina*, the fruit of the *Pomaceæ*, and several other natural families of plants, which are known to be uniformly innocent in their effects.

The *sensible properties* of plants afford another clue to their influence on the human system. It is true, that observations derived from this source will not serve us in forming very minute distinctions. They are, however, almost always adequate in vegetable productions, to enable us to distinguish what is innocent and salubrious, from what is noxious and virulent. The brute creation depend wholly upon the powers of sense in selecting their food, and this reliance does not often betray them. In regard to mankind it almost uniformly happens, that what is sweet, delicious, or aromatic, proves nutritive or salutary; while on the other hand, vegetable poisons are nauseous, acrid, and disgusting. It has been observed, that it would have been a sort of treachery in nature to have made it otherwise. Considering the universal dissemination of poisonous plants, and the